

HOOP DREAMS IN READING

On the Rebound



Reading Senior High, at the end of Douglass Street, was where it all started for Lonnie Walker and the Red Knights. The boys' basketball team was feted along 13th Street after winning a state championship last spring in Hershey, Pa. **TIM TAI / Staff**

A budding star and a state title have sparked a civic renaissance in this forgotten Pa. town.

By Frank Fitzpatrick
STAFF WRITER

READING — There's a ubiquitous poster of Lonnie Walker in this weary city's elementary and middle schools, an image of the ex-Reading High star soaring for a dunk, his elbow cocked, his mouth open, his hair standing on end like an exclamation point.

Located at chest level is an inset, a letter Walker wrote last spring to the children of his oft-maligned hometown in the wake of Reading High's first state boys' basketball championship.

"Be true to yourself," it reads in part, "because anything is possible. Believe in yourself. Look at me. I'm just a kid from Reading."

On Wednesday night, seven months after Walker led the Red Knights to a title that touched off an emotional outburst in a city with little reason to smile, Walker will return for an appearance being hailed as another chapter in Reading's nascent revival.



Former Reading standout Lonnie Walker, now a freshman at the University of Miami, was the center of attention during the Knights' victory parade. **Reading Eagle**

A folk hero here at 18, the bally-hooed University of Miami freshman will lead the Hurricanes against La Salle in a game that will bring 7,300 fans to Santander Arena, a facility that just a few years ago was a lone jewel in a drab and decaying downtown.

Residents and civic leaders have portrayed this first Division I basketball game ever here as something more than an athletic contest. In their view, it is, much like last spring's groundbreaking championship and the parade that followed, another sign that Reading is rebounding at last.

"I've really seen so much positive activity and change since that basketball championship," said Robin Costenbader-Jacobson, whose Reading roots go back 10 generations. "There's

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NET NEUTRALITY

FCC set to reverse regulations for internet

The proposals, seen as a certainty, are seen as a victory for Comcast, Verizon.

By Bob Fernandez
STAFF WRITER

The Federal Communications Commission is about to formally roll back Obama-era net neutrality protections that ban blocking or throttling internet traffic by telecom companies and broadly deregulate the internet, classifying the network wired into most American homes as an information service instead of a utility.

FCC officials disclosed proposed rules Tuesday after months of public debate that included 22 million comments submitted to the agency. Critics responded that the changes would hurt consumers and were a "sham."

Enactment of the new rules is virtually guaranteed because of the Republican-controlled FCC, leading to big victories for Comcast, Verizon, and AT&T. Government oversight of how telecom companies manage the wired internet would be severely restricted, and the threat of utility-like price regulation on internet services would be erased, even as Comcast and other companies are looking to raise internet prices while revenue growth

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Ajit Pai is rolling back Obama-era protections.

CONGRESSMAN INVESTIGATED

In affidavit, U.S. accuses Brady of conspiracy lead

Authorities say the aim was to hide a payment made to a foe to drop out.

By Jeremy Roebuck
STAFF WRITER

In their clearest language to date, federal authorities have accused U.S. Rep. Robert Brady of leading a criminal conspiracy to hide a \$90,000 payment they say he made to persuade a 2012 primary opponent to drop out of the race, newly unsealed court records show.

The claim — tucked into a Nov. 1 search warrant affidavit unsealed Friday — alleges the congressman was an active participant in a scheme that has already elicited a guilty plea from Brady's one-time challenger, former Philadelphia Municipal Court Judge Jimmie Moore, and led to indictments against Brady aides Ken Smukler and Donald "D.A." Jones.

Agents and prosecutors filed the affidavit to persuade a judge to approve a search of bob-

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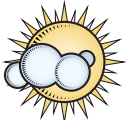


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BLACK FRIDAY

Online and in stores, the retailers are ready

In what is expected to be the best shopping season in a decade, the discounts have begun.

By Suzette Parmley
STAFF WRITER

On your mark ... get set ... shop! That time when we're all upon us again, as the region braces for the shopping extravaganza known as Black Friday.

For many, it even starts before the Thanksgiving meal is served. For others, it begins with lines, and sometimes campsites, after midnight leading up to the big day outside major stores.

This year, U.S. shopping malls will be abuzz despite closures, consolidations, and

bankruptcies throughout 2017, though Black Friday promises to be more digital than ever, with more discounts starting earlier. People are feeling good, and retailers want to capture as much of that estimated \$680 billion holiday sales pie as they can.

"We are expecting an average spend of \$1,226 per person — \$1,293 in the Greater Philadelphia marketplace," said Bill Park, partner at Deloitte & Touche LLP and head of its retail division for Philadelphia. "While internet sales

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